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ABSTRACT

This paper presents a review of the research concerning the effect of the lecture versus the inquiry teaching method on student achievement in social studies. The small amount of research found which deals with this topic revealed that the findings are inconclusive as to the best method of presentation in social studies. More research is needed. Some examples of the kinds of research reports found and described in the paper follow. In 1968 Dubin and Taveggia reviewed the data for several scores of comparisons of the lecture and discussion method at the college level. Of 88 comparisons between traditional lecture and discussion methods, as reported in 36 experimental studies, 51% favored the lecture method and 49% favored the discussion method. When they standardized the criterion test scores from these studies, making them comparable from study to study, the average difference between test performance following exposure to lecture or discussion methods, across studies, was very close to zero. It appears that when properly used, the different teaching methods were roughly equivalent in providing opportunities to attain knowledge. In 1980 Janicki, Peterson, and Swing conducted a study to investigate naturally occurring aptitude-treatment interaction with three teaching approaches in social studies: lecture-recital, inquiry, and public issue discussion. Results of experimenter-constructed test outcomes showed the lecture-recitation approach was superior. But relative effectiveness of the approach also depended on student ability and level of conformance. Different approaches were good for different abilities. (RM)

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THE EFFECTS OF LECTURE VERSUS INQUIRY METHODS OF PRESENTATION ON STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT IN SOCIAL STUDIES: A REVIEW OF THE RESEARCH

Phillip B. Tyrell
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Lucas (1974) tends to support the views of those educators who believe that a more active participation by students in the learning process is indeed a feasible alternative to lecture-discussion technique. Simulation-gaming is an example of this alternative. The study showed the simulation-gaming student did better on cognitive achievement and delayed internal post test in United States history classes than students of lecture-discussion methods.

On the effect of lecture versus inquiry method on student achievement in social studies, there appears to be little information.

Teachers in elementary, secondary and college classrooms frequently raise this point: Students participate in a dynamic society charged with emotion, physical action and imagination. However, many courses in the school setting emphasize abstract and relatively passive learning processes, allowing students few opportunities for active participation in the learning process. This emphasis has created a high degree of frustration among students who feel the need for active participation in the learning process and in social affairs.

Another area of concern in student achievement is the questioning used by teachers; the quality of questioning used during the inquiry method of teaching. Tyler's (1972) study of second graders showed higher level questioning by teachers can improve pupil achievement is common in literature. Oral presentation of instructional questions in social studies materials for second grade children resulted in higher achievement levels on the part of the learner than did written presentation.

King (1980) used modeling versus lecture-discussion in training future teachers in the area of health. The use of micro-teaching was

designed to determine whether the use of a coping model (imperfect model recorded on video) or a lecture-discussion style would influence graduate students in three behaviors: redirection, general praise, paraphrasing. No significant change from the pre-post test for the lecture-discussion group while the coping model group had significant changes from pre to post tests. The coping model was an imperfect model by which they could observe and facilitate verbal teaching techniques more efficiently.

> Since the academic work of Gage (1972), Popham (1971), and Denemark and Macdonald (1967) has postulated that traditional (lecture-discussion type) techniques for training teachers have not effectively prepared teachers, this investigation was designed to contribute some plausible and efficient recommendations for training undergraduates (p. 530).

Bailey, McTeer, and Hugh (1980) conducted a research project with high school students on the effect of using popular music in a high school contemporary U.S. history course. Two groups of high school students were observed at South Cobb High School. The experimental group listened to popular music and analyzed it in respect to its historical content or teaching style without music. In order to see if both groups were matched evenly in intellectual ability, the Henmon-Nelson Test of Mental Ability was given. A T-test was computed for differences between the mean scores of the two groups. A pre and post test of the Remmer's Any School Subject Surbey was given to both groups as a measure for attitude. Results of these varied teaching techniques showed effects upon student interest in subject matter and knowledge of the subject matter. Neither group showed a significant difference in test scores in interest or performance. This shows that either method of presentation in social studies would not detract from learning.

Since all teachers of history are not comfortable with teaching both lecture and inquiry, how important are varied presentations in history?

Any method in which the content is understood is what counts.

Dubin and Taveggia (1968) reviewed the data for several scores of comparison of the lecture and discussion method at the college level. Of eighty-eight comparisons between traditional lecture and tradicional discussion methods, as reported in thirty-six experimental studies, fifty-one percent favored the lecture method and forty-nine percent favored the discussion method. When they standardized the criterion test scores from these studies, making them comparable from study to stydy, the average difference between test performance following exposure to lecture or discussion methods, across studies, was very close to zero. In short, it appears that when properly used, the different teaching methods are roughly equivalent in providing opportunities to attain knowledge.

Officers of the Society (1976) stated that average class size throughout this country is around thirty students per class. As teachers argue for class reduction, less students and more teachers means more finances. With school finances being what they are, no radical changes in class size can be expected. At times lecture is appropriate; it can transmit information to the whole class. Even discussion will take place with small group but, just like choosing the best content and objectives, the teaching method will have to be selective. The article states that both methods of instruction are used to instruct students.

Gage (1972) contends that student achievement takes place because of two reasons: 1) background forces- student' homelife and their classmates and 2) school characteristics- library and other facilities, staff. These reports found that family background accounted for a relatively high proportion of the variance in student achievement.

Saracho (1980) stated in a study that teachers should be aware of student cognitive styles, especially teachers of elementary students. All students have a certain way they learn best. Individuals have a variety of characteristics which develop their ability for learning and performance. An early assessment of the student cognitive style can help teachers design an appropriate curriculum and teaching methodology which parallels their cognitive style.

Teachers with higher expectations of students also seem to push students to higher achievement levels. Janicki, Peterson and Swing (1980) conducted a study to investigate naturally occurring aptitude-treatment interaction with three teaching approaches in social studies: lecture-recital, inquiry and public issue discussion. Results of experimenter-constructed test outcome showed the lecture-recitation approach was superior. But relative effectiveness of the approach also depended on student ability and level of conformance. Certain approaches are good for different abilities.

Herman (1969) examined the amount of lecture or discussion in a social studies classroom. He breaks down a classroom period into direct and indirect parts of discussion. The direct participation is predominately the lecture part of the traditional classroom. Teacher lecture is a dominant part of a classroom.

Johnson (1979); this article stated that problems in education are not in methods or materials taught but the indecision and confusions in education.

Hinrichsen and Schaumburg (1975) concluded in their study, that there was no significant difference between inquiry and traditional lecture approaches concerning "survival rate" (grades A, B, C, or D and credit),

"successful performance" (grades A,B, or C and credit), "high performance" (grades A or B and credit). The results associated with academic performance do not support their hypothesis that academic performance is higher by inquiry than by lecture presentation.

The findings are inconclusive as to the best method of presentation in social studies on student achievement. More research is needed.

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